

2005 HARVEST CELEBRATION FARM TOUR

In today's Puget Sound Food System, the majority of the food we eat travels many miles to reach us while the beautiful farmland that surrounds us rapidly disappears. As a result, urban residents are finding it harder to connect to local food sources. WSU King County

Extension is helping to improve this situation by making local farms more accessible. For the past seven years Extension's Harvest Celebration Farm Tour has brought thousands of people out to King County Farms. 2005 was no exception.



On October 1st, 26 King County farms and 10 other farm-related sites welcomed Puget Sound residents, inviting them to experience first-hand their productivity and abundance. The tour gave these farmers a chance to share their knowledge and benefit from increased contact with the public. Families learned about the importance of our local farms and enjoyed a variety of fun activities on the tour, which included sites in both north and south King County as well as Vashon Island.

Featured Events on the 2005 Tour

More than 5500 people visited the many different sites on the October 1st tour to experience local fruit and vegetable production, pick their own pumpkins, pet sheep, alpacas and other livestock, press their own cider, run through a corn maze or take a hayride.

In addition, this year's tour featured a variety of special events geared towards the public while providing learning opportunities to strengthen the relationship between Puget Sound agriculture and urban residents.

Kick-off Events With Elementary Students

Given the success of the farm field trips held before the 2004 Harvest Celebration, WSU King County Extension brought 250 students, teachers, and parent chaperones out to Fall City Farm and Full Circle Farm during the week leading up to the 2005 farm tour. First, second, and third graders from White Center Heights and Thorndyke Elementary



Two sisters find the largest pumpkin at South 47 Farm!

Photo: Dutch Meyer



First-graders from White Center Heights School check out the beans at Fall City Farm.

Photo: Sylvia Kantor

Schools traveled from the city to celebrate the harvest and learn about farm work and farm life. Students explored lessons in nutrition and farming while participating in hands-on activities. Each child went home with their own carrot or pumpkin.

Heritage Farms

Thanks to a new partnership with 4 Culture and King County's Office of Business Relations and Economic Development, this year's tour featured various agricultural heritage sites around King County. These included a Japanese strawberry farm on Vashon Island and a historic farm-to-market road. The Harvest Celebration Farm Tour Guide featured descriptions of each site in addition to brief histories of farming in King County.

Chef Demonstrations

Farm tour attendees visiting The South 47 Farm, Jubilee Farm, Full Circle Farm, and the Herbfarm Restaurant Production Garden enjoyed demonstrations by some of Seattle's finest chefs. Featured chefs included Jerry Traunfeld of the Herbfarm Restaurant, Scott Samuel of the Seattle Culinary Academy, and Brian Scheehser of the Hunt Club at the Sorrento Hotel. These chefs showed the public that cooking with local produce is both easy and fun.

Celebrate the Bounty of King County!

THE HARVEST CELEBRATION REACHES ITS GOALS!

Goal 1: Increase public awareness and appreciation for local agriculture and food systems.

More than 25% of the people who responded to our survey indicated that they heard about the tour via word of mouth and nearly 60% said that they would share their Harvest Celebration experience with others, a strong indication that the event is making a lasting impression on people.

Goal 2: Highlight the productivity of small-acreage, diversified farms in King County for the urban population.

Thanks to the Seattle Weekly pull-out, more than 110,000 households learned about the King County tour and other food and farm initiatives going on around the region. As a result, over 42% of our survey respondents were urban residents and more than 67% found out about the tour through the newspaper.

Goal 3: Raise awareness of the threatened state of agricultural lands in King County

More than 59% of our survey respondents reported that they are willing to buy more food directly from local farmers in order to help keep farms viable in King County and over 23% said that they will participate in local agricultural policy discussions as a result of going on the tour.

Goal 4: Educate the public to vote for local farms with their food dollars.

Of the tour attendees that were not already buying local food, nearly 25% reported that they are now likely to do so.



A little one pets baby goats at K-Jo Farm on Vashon.

Photo: Amy Grotta

"This was a wonderful day. We enjoyed the fresh air, the wonderful people, and learned something to boot! Thanks for the opportunity!"

"Please continue this tour. We find it very enjoyable and informative. It reminds us of the importance of supporting the local farming community."

"This was such a rewarding experience. It was great to learn that farm products are available locally!"

"We really like the Harvest Celebration. It has become a tradition within our family. Please keep it up!"

- Visitor comments, 2005 Harvest Celebration Farm Tour

PUBLICITY AND SPONSORSHIP

In order to reach a larger urban population, this year's farm tour guide was published in the Seattle Weekly on September 14th. 100,000 copies were delivered through their distribution channels and WSU King County Extension distributed an additional 10,000 during the month of September at farmers markets, libraries, and through individual farmers. In addition to maps of each section of the tour, the guide included a letter of support from Ron Sims, descriptions of each farm, tips on how to support local agriculture, and more. Thousands of flyers were also given out around King County and three rounds of press releases were sent out to the Puget Sound media. Articles were published in Parent Map, the King County Journal, the Capital Press, the Woodinville Weekly, and the Seattle Times.

This event would not have been possible without the generous support of our sponsors. This year's sponsors included the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks, the Puget Sound Fresh Campaign, King County Office of Business Relation and Economic Development, PCC Natural Markets, 4 Culture, Full Circle Farm, Pioneer Organics, Celilo Group Media, the King/Pierce Farm Bureau, United Natural Foods, The Master Gardener Foundation, Cedar Grove Composting, Willows Lodge, Washington State Connections, Stewardship Partners, Seattle Tilth, Salish Lodge, Thundering Hooves Farm, Mid Puget Sound Fisheries Enhancement Group, Neighborhood Farmers Market Alliance, and Top Pot Doughnuts. Our fundraising efforts resulted in a donation increase of 97%.

For more information on King County's Harvest Celebration Farm Tour visit our webpage at www.metrokc.gov/wsucce/FarmTour or call 206-205-3206

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Children learn about Full Circle Farm from Farmer Matt.

Photo: Hannah Cavendish-Palmer